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Agricultural report about plaster or gypsum by Thomas G. Clemson

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recent deposits of which we have spoken. The blue limestone formation, so celebrated for its excellent wheat lands in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, continues through Georgia, comes to the surface near Clarksville, in Habersham county, and extends to the Island of Cuba, where we have traced it again for miles.

The limestone lands of the State of New York are celebrated for their fertility and the magnesian limestone of the great west has prodigious extension.

In closing our observations upon lime, we will remark that of all mineral substances it is among the most extensively diffused, so much so that it would be impossible to find a soil without it. An amateur asked us if we had ever found lime in the soil on which we lived; he thought it absent. We answered that, even if we had failed to detect it with the aid of reagents, there was higher evidence of its presence, which could not be contradicted, namely: the bones of the animals reared upon the place, the eggs of our hens, and the houses which snails carried upon their backs.

Those who desire details upon the green sand marl of New Jersey and Delaware, will do well to consult the reports of Messrs. Rogers and Booth; the former was charged with the geological survey of New Jersey, the latter with that of Delaware.

PLASTER, OR GYPSUM.

It is probable that the "marl" of the ancients was plaster of Paris, or gypsum, but it was not until near the close of the last century that its incontestible utility became known; since that period it has become almost a necessity; nor is it surprising that such should be the case, when we consider its efficacy on certain crops, the small amount required to produce a great increase, and the facility with which it can be procured and prepared. The first authentic experiments of which we have record were made by a German clergyman, named Meyer. These were repeated in France, when it soon grew into extensive use. Sulphate of lime, as its name indicates, is composed of sulphuric acid, lime, and water.

Sulphuric acid.....	46	} = 100
Lime	33	
Water.....	21	

It is unusually soft, and may be scratched with the finger nail. When pure, it is generally of a whitish color, but according as it is found mixed with foreign matter its color varies. It assumes a variety of forms, compact, granular, fibrous, pulverulent, crystalline, &c. Its crystals are sometimes perfectly limpid. Gypsum is plentifully and widely disseminated throughout the crust of the globe, and is confined to no age or particular formation. In some cases it would appear to owe its existence to the decomposition of the sulphuret of iron in contact with limestone or, again, to the action of sulphurous vapors upon that rock. It is not often fossiliferous; but that which is found at Montmartre, in the environs of Paris, is an exception. At that locality